

**Claims**

What is claimed is:

1. A remote control comprising:

5 a housing;

a controller supported by said housing;

a display supported by said housing and coupled to said controller for  
communication therewith, said display divided into a pre-etched touch screen area  
defining a plurality of touch selectable buttons, and a message area operative to  
10 display alphabetic characters; and

memory coupled to said controller for communication therewith and containing  
program instructions that allow a user to define a custom label for a selected one of  
said plurality of selectable buttons that is displayed in said message area when said  
selected one of said plurality of selectable buttons is actuated.

15 2. The remote control of claim 1, wherein said message area is defined by a dot  
matrix configuration.

3. The remote control of claim 2, wherein said dot matrix configuration defines two  
20 rows of message area.

4. The remote control of claim 1, wherein said custom label is defined during a  
learning mode of the remote.

25 5. The remote control of claim 1, wherein said custom label is defined during a setup  
mode of the remote.

6. The remote control of claim 1, wherein said display comprises an LCD.

30 7. The remote control of claim 1, further comprising:

a receiver supported by said housing and coupled to said controller for  
communication therewith, said receiver operative to receive signals from another  
remote control for learning the received signals; and

a transmitter supported by said housing and coupled to said controller for communication therewith, said transmitter operative to transmit signals from the universal remote for control of an unconnected electronic component.

5 8. The remote control of claim 7, wherein said receiver comprises an IR receiver, and said transmitter comprises an IR transmitter.

9. The remote control of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of hard buttons carried by said housing and coupled to said controller for communication therewith, said  
10 program instructions further allow the user to define a custom label for a selected one of said plurality of hard buttons that is displayed in said message area when said selected one of said plurality of hard buttons is actuated.

15 10. A remote control comprising:  
a housing;  
means, supported by said housing, for controlling the remote;  
means, supported by said housing and coupled to said means for controlling,  
for displaying a pre-etched touch screen area defining a plurality of touch selectable  
20 buttons, and a message area operative to display alphabetic characters; and  
means, coupled to said controller for communication therewith, for allowing a user to define a custom label for a selected one of said plurality of selectable buttons that is displayed in said message area when said selected one of said plurality of selectable buttons is actuated.

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11. The remote control of claim 10, wherein said message area is defined by a dot matrix configuration.

12. The remote control of claim 11, wherein said dot matrix configuration defines two  
30 rows of message area.

13. The remote control of claim 10, wherein said custom label is defined during a learning mode of the remote.

14. The remote control of claim 10, wherein said custom label is defined during a setup mode of the remote.

15. The remote control of claim 1, wherein said means for displaying comprises an LCD.

16. The remote control of claim 10, further comprising:

means, supported by said housing and coupled to said controller for communication therewith, for receiving signals from another remote control for learning the received signals; and

means, supported by said housing and coupled to said controller for communication therewith, for transmitting signals from the universal remote for control of an unconnected electronic component.

17. The remote control of claim 16, wherein said means for receiving comprises an IR receiver, and said means for transmitting comprises an IR transmitter.